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This review concentrates on articles which PALA members should find useful in their work.

Jonathan Culler in 'Interpretations: Data or Goals?' (1988: 275-90) examines the distinction between scholarship and criticism to ask what counts as knowledge. He establishes a hierarchy which places mere information beneath knowledge. The New Criticism, he explains created a new type of knowledge, namely explication of literary texts. Hence, both criticism and extrinsic biographical investigation were both worthy activities since they contributed to our total sum of knowledge. This offered another goal for critical interpretation besides the traditional one of elucidating the meaning of a work.

However, these justifications and definitions of knowledge are from the past. What counts now is an understanding of the discourses which belong to critical theory: post-structuralist theory and deconstruction. He seeks to define the word, poetics, to save it from meaning merely another interpretive method. This does not mean that interpretation is not a valid exercise, though. In fact critical interpretation becomes more data. His aim or conclusion is not to dismiss interpretation from literary studies but to use it on our way to a new understanding of language. The result will be a differently articulated domain of knowledge.

Within the paper Culler does some poetics on Baudelaire's *Correspondances*, a useful exercise which provides us with a model if we want to use it in our own teaching. This practice of doing a complete example analysis in the middle of your article gives value to the piece, adding more to our body of knowledge or at the very least, providing more data.

Susan Handelman in 'Parodic Play and Prophetic Reason: Two Interpretations of Interpretation' (1988: 395-423) sees in Levinas an alternative to the current list of interpretive methods, which she says are:

Anarchic dissemination of signs or analysis of the "codes" determining meaning or demystification of oppressive ideologies by revealing their status as constructs.

(Handelman 1988: 396)

Levinas, she says, is one of the thinkers who made Derridean deconstruction possible. The paper gives a good potted history of Levinas. It mentions his attack on the impersonality of the phrase *There is* (Il y a, es gibt). She draws out his idea of language as a gift; the signaller of the sign is neither the signified nor the signifier but the giver. Thus exposure, and from that, vulnerability, are the conditions of communication. Bakhtin's dialogical theory of language neglects this point. Deconstruction asserts that there is (sic) nothing beyond language but Levinas sees language as instituted in a world where it is necessary to give.

Number 4 of *Poetics Today* is given over to the 1986 GRIP conference. GRIP is the Group for Research into the Institutionalization and Professionalization of Literary Studies and tackles questions like 'What should we know?' Culler explains in a short piece (1988: 783-89) how the GRIP Project researches into the teaching of literature and attempts to site the history of literary studies in a history of power relations after Michel Foucault. He documents how the social sciences profit in academia by imitating physical sciences and by being open to technologies. This, he argues, leads to intellectual emptiness.

Dieter Freundlieb in 'Semiotic Idealism' (1988: 807-41) first defines this term, semiotic idealism. It is, he says, the belief that linguistic signs constitute reality rather than represent it. Freundlieb offers a critique of the notion that we can only experience reality through previously learnt linguistic or semiotic codes, he is working in the same area as that mapped out by Lance St. John Butler at the 1989 PALA Conference in his paper 'What Isn't Literature?'¹. Beginning with Saussure's arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, the word, he develops his argument by systematically attacking Saussure and the structuralists (including Hawkes, Belsey, even Culler). The resulting essay is refreshingly challenging and hence

¹ Butler's paper is to appear in *Parlance* 2 (2), Summer 1990.

worth reading as an antidote to over indulgence in seventies structuralist poetics. Despite his strident style, though, the ideas from this period do not lose any of their attractiveness.

Issue Number 3 of this volume has the theme 'Aspects of Literary Theory' and if you take up Duke's offer of a free sample issue then this is the one to ask for. Lubomir Dolezel in 'Mimesis and Possible Worlds' (1988: 475-96) proposes an alternative to mimetic theories of fictionality. Mimetic criticism gained acceptance again between 1946 and 1957 when Auerbach offered many examples of fictional particulars finding their 'real counterparts' in actual universal characteristics, for example, the typical peasant. The theory of mimetic semantics, which Dolezel postulates requires a multiple set of worlds in which to exist. In his fictional semantics he states that, for example, Tolstoy's Napoleon is no less fictional than his Pierre Bezuchov. He states that literature provides the means for creating impossible worlds but the fictional worlds are accessible only through semiotic channels.

Dolezel deals with different types of narrative (meta-fictio, skaz) examining each of them as separate entities rather than considering the whole of text as one lump and commenting on that. He renews our confidence in the idea that texts are possibly different and that we should be sensitive to the nuances of each text type.

Dolezel's article is linked to Ronen's 'Completing the Incompleteness of Fictional Entities' (1988: 497-514) in the use of the example question 'How many children did Lady Macbeth have?'. They both use the unanswerability of this question as a way of distinguishing between literature and reality. Their argument may have a flaw, though, since reality has many unanswerable questions, too. For example, you cannot know what is happening in the next room to where you are sitting reading this but this lack of knowledge does not make you and this text unreal. And do some literary texts have reality in them? Dolezel allows us to treat different styles as different types of text. In certain texts authors deliberately use their own style to reveal something about themselves. Often the narrator of a story is contrived and constructed but in other stories the aim is to communicate a voice which is unaffected. The authors of works in this category are providing a text which is as much a physical manifestation of themselves as, say, their choice of clothing, their hairstyle or the tone of their voice, unconscious and, possibly accidental. This is reality. This style in this type of text means that this author exists. Finally, to Brian McHale's 'Telling Postmodernist Stories' (1988: 545-71) which reproduces Max Apple's short story 'Post-modernism' in an appendix. McHale uses the story for analysis in his article making the whole paper complete for re-use in the class, if required. It's good fun too. McHale also turns to this problem of what he calls the inscribed author in the text, concluding with a statement which disagrees with my thoughts of above but I'll write him into my text along with you and me and even give him the last word:

The ontological barrier between inscribed characters and real-world persons is unbreachable.

(McHale: 1988 565)

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